

Annual Report of the IFLA-PAC China Center

Since the “China Ancient Books Preservation Project” was officially launched by the Chinese government in 2007, the IFLA-PAC China Center has carried out a lot of fruitful work, including a general survey and registration of ancient books, talent training for book preservation, digitization, compilation and publication, restoration, overseas cooperation on preservation, promotion of document preservation, and document acquisition and collection. The China Center mainly completed the following work in 2014:

I. General Survey and Registration of Ancient Books

Considering the unclear status quo of ancient books, the China Center deployed the nationwide general survey and registration of ancient books through the general survey and registration work platform, to compile *A General Catalogue of Chinese Ancient Books (Provincial Volumes)*.

Remarkable achievements were made through this effort. By the end of 2014, over 1.3 million pieces of survey data had been submitted by more than 600 ancient books collection institutions that covered 28 provinces and municipalities, as well as 2 Offices directly under the Central Government.

The China Center also actively promoted the development and maintenance of the data management platform for ancient books general survey and restoration. More than 970,000 pieces of data were registered in the “national Chinese ancient books general survey and registration work platform” that can provide technical maintenance service for 42 network nodes. Over 160,000 pieces of data were accessible in the database based on the national survey and registration. And the management system for the restoration of national ancient books (Phase II) received qualified acceptance.

II. *National Rare Ancient Book Directory* and “National Key Institutions of Ancient Books Preservation” Declared for Evaluation

Targeting at rare ancient books, the China Center organized the declaration and evaluation of *National Rare Ancient Book Directory* and “National Key Institutions of Ancient Books Preservation”, with the aim to improve the preservation of this type of books. From 2007 to 2011, the China Center organized four times the declaration, evaluation and publication of *National Rare Ancient Book Directory* and “National Key Institutions of Ancient Books Preservation”. A total of 11,375 rare ancient books and 166 collection institutions were selected and announced to the society by the State Council. Meanwhile, preservation and conservation centers at the provincial and municipal levels carried out the declaration and evaluation of provincial and municipal rare ancient books directory and key preservation institutions of ancient books. Approved books and preservation institutions were given key protection and a hierarchical system for ancient books preservation was preliminarily established.

In 2014, the China Center implemented the 5th round of declaration and

evaluation of *National Rare Ancient Book Directory* and “National Key Ancient Books Preservation Institutions”, and throughout the country a total of 7,252 ancient books and 21 collection institutions of ancient books participated in the declaration.

III. Training Talents for Ancient Books Preservation

Since the implementation of the “China Ancient Books Preservation Project”, the China Center made great efforts to organize on-the-job training, and cooperate with domestic famous universities to provide diploma education, as there was a great shortage of staff in this respect for many years.

Training classes of all types were given in 2014, including collation of catalogs from the general survey and registration, ancient books digitization, ancient books identification, ancient books restoration, stele rubbings from inscriptions, and cataloging ancient books of ethnic minorities, reaching 17 times and 700 trainees. Constructions of the “talent training bases of national ancient books preservation” were deployed and 12 training bases were established all over the country. 5 national restoration technique training centers were established to instruct technical skills through their apprenticeship system.

Besides, we cooperated with institutions of higher education to cultivate talents and promote the development of ancient books preservation as a discipline. By cooperating with Fudan University and Zhongshan University, two famous universities in China, we carried out an education for master’s degree on ancient books preservation, and on 30th November 2014, the Chinese Ancient Books Preservation and Conservation Institute of Fudan University was officially established.

IV. Ancient Books Restoration and Supplies Distribution

The China Center reinforced the management of national restoration centers and key institutions of ancient books preservation in order to enhance the standardized and scientific levels of ancient books restoration.

A Proposed Standard on National Rare Ancient Books Restoration Expense was compiled in 2014. A total of more than 20 kinds of restoration instruments in 30-plus specifications were purchased for 31 provincial restoration centers and 12 talent training bases of national ancient books preservation. Meanwhile, the work on R & D, producing, distributing and storing restoration supplies were well organized and nearly 100,000 pieces of restoration papers were purchased, checked and distributed.

The China Center continued to engage in such thematic restoration programs as the “Tianlulinlang”. It also organized the surveys on the damage and restoration of national rare ancient books, and collected feedbacks from 29 provincial centers and collection institutions, so as to organize and implement restorations on national scales.

V. Digitization of Ancient Books

As an important method of preserving Chinese rare ancient books, digitization can authentically and clearly present the original appearance of ancient books, promote the dissemination of traditional classic culture, and satisfy the needs of

professional scholars and readers; it not only improves the level of cultural services for the public, but also efficiently solves the contradictions between the preservation and utilization of ancient books. Therefore, the China Center launched the “Chinese Rare Ancient Books Database” Project in 2012. By the end of 2014, about 16TB of data concerning ancient books had been submitted by 16 institutions, and of the whole submitted 240,000 shots, 190,000 shots had been initially inspected and waiting for submission.

Meanwhile, the China Center also actively promoted the digitization of collected rare book microfilms. In 2014, a total of 3.36 million pieces of microfilms were scanned by digital shooting and pre-inspected, more than 2 million went through image processing, directory indexing, format conversion and quality inspection, and over 1.7 millions of them were submitted for final inspection. By the end of the year, over 2.85 million shots had been composed into altogether 1,340 series of 39,628 volumes, and then were issued on the “digitized rare ancient books” column of the National Library of China (NLC) website. Besides, the NLC website continued to issue online databases on rare books, such as “Harvard-Yenching” and “the Oriental Library”, for academic use.

VI. Compilation and Publication of Ancient Books

Together with the primeval preservation of ancient books, the China Center attached great importance to renewable preservation, so as to promote the rational use of rare ancient books. Since 2002, the Rescue Project of Chinese Rare Books, funded by the Chinese Government, has selected rare ancient books of all dynasties to make photolithographic reproductions. The purpose of such large-scale and systematical reproductions was to protect, develop and utilize the rare ancient books reasonably and thereby to make the most of those rare books and make them accessible to both the academic circles and readers. The reproduction of rare books reduced the circulation and utilization of and thus protected the originals. 5 series of books hit the press through the Rescue Project of Chinese Rare Books: the first two series named *Tang and Song Dynasty Series* and *Jin and Yuan Dynasty Series* reached 787 titles in all, and the following three ones named *Ming Dynasty Series*, *Qing Dynasty Series* and *Chinese Ethnic Characters Series* amounted to a total of 554 titles. All the publishing work was completed in 2014.

In 2014, the China Center went on advancing the compilation and publication of certain thematic ancient books, including that of the *History of Chinese Rare Ancient Books Series*, and the collection and compilation of the prefaces and postscripts of the ancient books in the *National Rare Ancient Books Directory*. 12 titles of the books in the above-mentioned series had been submitted for publication. The first three batches of the collection and compilation of the prefaces and postscripts of the ancient books listed in the above Directory had been basically completed, and they were to be submitted for publication after the inspection.

VII. Cooperation Project of Investigation & Digitization of Overseas Chinese Ancient Books

The Cooperation Project of Investigation & Digitization of Overseas Chinese Ancient Books, officially launched by the China Center in 2012, worked on cooperative preservation in aspects of the investigation, cataloging, digitization and restoration of overseas Chinese ancient books.

In March 2014, a delegation of the China Center went to America for the Annual Conference of East Asian Libraries in North America, and gave a report to introduce the cooperation project, which received a warm welcome from the North American colleges. The 8th Seminar for the Identification and Preservation of Ancient Books was held in Beijing, which was the first group training for overseas Chinese ancient books librarians to learn the identification and cataloging of such books. The compilation project of the *Directory of Chinese Rare Ancient Books in North America* was carried forward, and by the end of 2014, a total of 10 overseas libraries had submitted the bibliographic data of collected Chinese rare ancient books.

VIII. Promotion of Ancient Books Preservation

To popularize ancient books and make people aware of ancient books preservation, in recent years the China Center made vigorous efforts to promote and held a series of forums and exhibitions, achieving good social effects.

During the 2014 Chinese Library Annual Conference, the China Center held the “Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture Forums”, and famous scholars were invited to deliver speeches and have discussions, attracting wide attention from all walks of life. Domestic famous experts and scholars also discussed and proposed *An Initiative for Library Workers on Ancient Books*. An exhibition and experience zone under the “Chinese Ancient Books Preservation Project” was set during the annual conference to comprehensively display the achievements of the project.

In 2014, a prize-awarding essay writing competition with the topic of “Chinese Ancient Books and I”, orientating to people in and outside China, was held by the China Center on *Guangming Daily*, an influential newspaper in the Chinese cultural and intellectual communities. Over 1500 essays were collected, and prize-winning essays were published over ten issues on that newspaper.

Organized by the China Center, the “Valuable Volumes/Cefuqianhua — Special Exhibition of Rare Ancient Books” was simultaneously held in the NLC and four provincial libraries, exhibiting 1,000 titles of Chinese rare ancient books, and was very well received.

In 2014, the China Center also organized activities for promoting the achievements made in Chinese Ancient Books Preservation Plan in 50 public libraries in 10 provinces, such as Anhui and Jiangsu, which received warm welcome by readers.

IX. Document acquisition

Document acquisition is an important part of the ancient books preservation. In 2014, the NLC, where the China Center was located, acquired a large number of ancient documents to enrich the collection by means of donation, solicitation and purchase.

The acquisition in 2014 included: 25 volumes of rare ancient books under 2 titles, 172 volumes of rare books under 155 titles, 134 volumes of hard-cover and fine-print books under 28 titles, 145 volumes of foreign rare books under 12 titles, 5,043 volumes of manuscripts under 277 titles; 473 volumes of general ancient books under 94 titles, of which 344 volumes under 37 titles were donated and 129 volumes under 57 titles were purchased.

Also, 836 volumes of rubbings under 634 titles were collected, including 817 volumes under 622 titles donated by private owners. 50 volumes under 36 titles were collected from donations, of which 17 volumes under 12 titles were stone rubbings and 4 volumes under 2 titles were made by our staff themselves. Besides, 2,073 volumes under 1,645 titles were received for purchase.

The acquisition and cataloging of the purchased maps in Chinese and foreign languages, New Year pictures and old photos all made breakthroughs. 2,300 volumes under 1,500 titles of the maps in foreign languages were acquired, making the number of acquisition rank the first in recent years. 18 batches of such works were successfully solicited from the society, reaching 2,401 volumes under 1,983 titles in all. The number of the solicited articles increased obviously, and 6 batches of related articles were purchased in auctions.

12,592 volumes under 3,593 titles of documents, like local chronicles and family genealogies, were acquired in 2014. The Ethnic Language Group of NLC purchased 2 volumes under 2 titles of the Buddhist sutras and Pratta sutras in Tibetan language, and two batches of 28 volumes under 28 titles of ancient books in the Yi language from collector Wang Yimin in Guizhou Province.

Among them, Xu Keru donated *Xu Baoheng's Diaries* and other manuscripts, Zhang Zhonggang donated the manuscripts of *Annotations of the Complete Works of Du Fu*, totaling one title of 3,280 leaves, Ruan Yuanchao donated Ruan Zhangjing's annotated manuscripts, including *Some Materials of the Period on Taihang Mountain*, and Zhao Jingzhong transferred the possession of some rare books, including *The Lamp over the Branch Road* and some ancient books in ethnic languages, all of which became the highlights of the acquisition in 2014. The "autonomous rubbing" of the stones and bronzes rubbings was another highlight of the year.